AESTHETIC FITNESS OF NEW ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN IN URBAN HISTORICAL CONTEXT IN THE CITY OF SHIRAZ

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved wife Saeideh, who has put more than her share of life during my study, also to my father and mother because without their presence, support, and comprehension I would have not achieved my goal.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to establish the quality that contributed to the aesthetic fitness of new architectural design in urban historical context. Although the international organizations such as UNESCO and ICOMOS in dealing with urban historical area as world heritage site had clear policies and guidelines to be followed with the aim for preservation, they were basically generic and did not critically address the needs of those historic cities to be relevant in the face of modern development. Besides the usual conservation approach, new aspirations and activities necessitated new interventions and spatial qualities within the urban historical areas. As well-documented in the literature, the degree of the existing design approaches within the built environment fluctuated between two extremes, which were compatibility and contradictory. Therefore, identifying building physical attributes those contributed to their historical contextual fitness regardless of the design approach, and the responses toward their aesthetic qualities were paramount in this research. Methodologically, a case study of Shiraz Historical City was adopted as it allowed an in-depth inquiry into the subject matter. The investigation has led to the construction of the city's morphological development and recognition of the building components and characters that contributed to the quality and physical presence of the historic city. Visual preference survey and interview were carried out to gauge both laypersons' and experts' preferences of the building aesthetic values and contextual fitness of new building interventions within historical areas based on existing historical built environments through photographic identification technique. The focus of the investigation was on the formal, symbolic and expressive aspects of adopted design strategies. Initially, the obtained data were analyzed quantitatively utilizing such as correlation, variant and estimation methods and then triangulated with the qualitative data that were obtained through in-depth interview, and also with the established theories. There were four main findings with regards to the aesthetic fitness quality that need to be considered in designing new interventions in urban historical context, which were characteristics of contextual compatibility, presence of diversity, novelty, coherence and style. There were also three main implications that need to be observed in dealing with such built environment, especially in terms of theory, design framework and public participation in general. These findings and implications were discussed in relation to the condition of Shiraz Historical City and may only be applicable to historical cities with similar characteristics. The main contribution of this research to the body of knowledge, however, lies in the establishment of the more definitive design parameters in dealing with new design interventions that contribute to their aesthetic fitness in urban historical context.

ABSTRAK

Matlamat kajian adalah untuk menghasilkan kualiti yang menyumbang kepada kemantapan estetik bagi reka bentuk seni bina baru dalam konteks bandar bersejarah. Walaupun usaha pertubuhan antarabangsa seperti UNESCO dan ICOMOS dalam mengendalikan kawasan bandar bersejarah sebagai tapak warisan dunia mempunyai polisi dan garis panduan yang jelas untuk diikuti dengan tujuan untuk pemuliharaan, pada dasarnya ia bersifat umum dan tidak mengutarakan keperluan bandar bersejarah berkenaan untuk terus relevan dalam menghadapi pembangunan moden. Selain pendekatan pemuliharaan yang biasa, hasrat dan aktiviti baru memerlukan campur tangan dan kualiti ruang baru di dalam kawasan bandar bersejarah. Hasil literatur mendapati terdapat perbezaan pandangan terhadap tahap pendekatan reka bentuk sedia ada dalam alam bina, iaitu yang mempunyai keserasian dan bercanggah. Justeru kajian akan mengenal pasti sifat fizikal bangunan yang menyumbang kepada kemantapan konteks bersejarah tanpa mengira pendekatan reka bentuknya dan maklum balas terhadap kualiti estetiknya. Metodologi yang digunakan adalah kajian kes di mana Bandar Bersejarah Shiraz dipilih kerana ia membolehkan siasatan terperinci dilakukan terhadap perkara yang ingin dikaji. Kajian dilakukan terhadap pembangunan morfologi bandar dan pengenalpastian komponen bangunan serta karakter yang menyumbang kepada kualiti dan fizikal bandar bersejarah pada hari ini. Soal-selidik dan temu bual digunakan untuk mengukur kecenderungan pendapat orang awam dan pakar-pakar terhadap nilai estetik bangunan dan kemantapan konteks bagi pembinaan bangunan baru di kawasan bersejarah berdasarkan alam bina bersejarah sedia ada di mana kedua-dua teknik tersebut melibatkan penggunaan pengenalpastian foto. Fokus kajian adalah terhadap aspek formal, simbolik dan ekspresif yang diguna dalam strategi reka bentuk. Justeru data yang diperoleh akan di analisa secara kuantitatif terlebih dahulu, seperti pendekatan korelasi, variasi dan anggaran, kemudian ditriangulasikan bersama-sama data kualitatif yang diperoleh menerusi temu bual mendalam dan teori sedia ada. Penemuan menunjukkan, empat faktor berkaitan dengan kualiti kemantapan estetik perlu diambil kira di dalam mereka bentuk binaan baru di dalam konteks perbandaran bersejarah iaitu, ciri-ciri kesesuaian konteks, kehadiran kepelbagaian, sesuatu yang baru, kepaduan dan gaya. Implikasi kajian pula dapat dibahagikan kepada tiga perkara apabila berurusan dengan alam bina iaitu, terutamanya dari aspek teori, rangka kerja reka bentuk dan penglibatan awam secara am. Penemuan dan implikasi yang dibincangkan adalah berhubung dengan keadaan Bandar Bersejarah Shiraz dan hanya sesuai diaplikasikan terhadap bandar bersejarah dengan ciri-ciri yang sama. Sumbangan utama kajian adalah kepada bidang pengetahuan, namun ia bergantung pada pembentukan parameter reka bentuk yang lebih jelas dalam berurusan dengan campur tangan reka bentuk baru yang menyumbang kepada kemantapan estetik dalam konteks sejarah perbandaran.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ICOMOS	-	International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites
EH	-	Historic Building and Monuments Commission for England
CABE	-	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
NSWH	-	New South Wales Heritage Office
HOI	-	Heritage organization of Iran
NJP	-	Naghshe Jahan Pars Consultants
NPS	-	An agency of the interior department responsible for the national parks in United States.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study investigates aesthetic quality of new architectural design that contributes to the sympathetic fitness in historical context. It addresses various aspects of environmental perception and aesthetic response in evaluating the appreciation of fitness in the historical context. Initially, the intention is to identify significant attributes of aesthetic properties that are essential to the achievement of aesthetic fitness. In this research "aesthetic fitness" is considered as a key concept that allows historical contexts and new additions to work cohesively, respecting and promoting each other's. It is imperative that feasible design guideline being established to promote the use of appropriate design elements for preservation of historical contexts.

The appearance and relationships of new buildings with their surrounding have been a serious design problem (Brolin, 1980; Groat, 1983; Eleishe, 1994; Wolford, 2005; Semes, 2009) for the last decades which has become a serious issue in many places. This design problem becomes more sensitive when context of new designs is historic and considers as built heritage. This issue discusses the essence of architectural design, new methods of buildings, and the new functions that affect the built environment by creating visual forms that should coexist with their historical

context. In the historical area, the main concern is to protect built heritage against various threats. Therefore, it is essential to review the theory of historic preservation and relevant guidelines and recommendations by leading global organizations for the new addition in the aforementioned environment in order to preserve urban cultural heritage. In addition, the importance of quality infill design has been widely confirmed as essential to preserve the sense of place of a historic district (Gorski and Cuvalo, 2009). This research investigates aesthetic quality of the new design that constitutes a deeply felt human good and consequently plays a very important role in sense of place in urban historical context.

During the development of historical settings, different stakeholders, developers and owners, government officials, and designers such as architects, planners, and landscape architects exert their influence according to their particular specialization and interest. Operating within their scope of interest, rules and regulations or professional expertise, each decision maker perceives the historic parts of city and its future development differently. The main purposes of this research is to investigate commonalities and differences between the perception of different groups like architects, conservationists, urban designers, urban planners as expert, and lay public as non-expert about the issue of aesthetic fitness. It focuses on their attitude towards various aspects of design quality of new construction in the historical context. Therefore, this study presents a historical review of the issue of contextualism in architecture. It is followed by an illustration of the various contextual design approaches. This research also reviews selected problems in the cities as a result of the divergent attitudes and roles of the different players involved in the urban development process. Subsequently, people's environmental perceptions and aesthetic responses, which were based on previous studies that had significant influences on judgments of community satisfaction, are discussed in the light of major perceptual and aesthetic theories. The main goal of these theoretical overviews is to formulate the basis for the following investigation of the issue of aesthetic fitness as perceived by various groups. This study also examines the concerns of aesthetic fitness of new infill design and its contribution to the two main dimensions of aesthetic; cognitive and affective. In additions, in order to find relationships of aesthetic responses and physical attributes of the environments, this

research presents the interaction of formal and symbolic associations between aesthetic dimensions of new buildings and their surroundings. The result of this examination forms the basis for the proposed research methodology and subsequent discussion of this research.

1.1 Background to the Problem

New additions in urban historical context implicate various responses. It may give different experiences and perception to different persons who regard each built environment as a notable place. One critical aspect in dealing with such intervention is the idea of compatibility. Whether it is replication or contradiction, the aim is to achieve aesthetic fitness.

1.1.1 Global Concern

1.1.1.1 New Developments in Historical Context

Cities' growth and the accompanying building activities are inevitable for their development and liveability. During this development, historic core and historic urban sites also need to be developed as an integral part of cities. Cultural built heritage should be considered in its full scope and complexity in the process of planning and ordering the dynamics of urban growth. Although new developments are inevitable, it is still possible to learn from historical environments to prevent the creation of new developments that contribute to urban sprawl, placelessness, and the loss of cultural identity (Lekagual, 2002). Cultural built heritage should begin to impose itself as a major component to be considered in the process of evolution and transformation of cities (Rodrigues and Lay, 2012). Therefore, any development in

historical settings is associated with historic preservation and respect to the values of heritage. In the preservation field, additions to historic environments as a part of development have always been a debatable issue (Groat, 1986; Tyler, 2009; Ames and Wagner, 2009). There have been many discussions about the proper way to approach a historical context when it is in need of expansion in order to create more usable space for a new or expanding use (Torres, 2009).

In recent decades, with the increased awareness of historic preservation, came an increased awareness of the need to be able to design new buildings in historical context. Thus, two issues are raised within this necessity. The first one is found in the lack of control and concern for aesthetic quality and visual appearance of historical cities, and lack of clear guidelines in a lot of countries of the world (Alderson, 2006, Rodregues *et al.*, 2012; Hanachi and Fadaei Nezhad, 2011), particularly in Third world countries like Iran (Hanachi and Fadaei Nezhad, 2011). The second one is the lack of examination of the intervening variables that affect the perception of aesthetic fitness for new design in this area (Al-Izzi, 1989; Eleishe, 1994; CABE, 2001; Vosmek, 2008; Rodregues and Lay, 2012).

In the context of historical cities, according to Rodregues *et al.,* (2012: 1) the regulatory mechanisms of projects are directed more to define "the constructive potential than the aesthetic quality of new buildings, and compatibility with the pre-existing structures". It seems that shortage of urban law for preservation of built heritage, also lack of regulatory mechanisms and control of urban aesthetics, end up in the destruction of local cultural heritage and growing disqualification of the landscape and visual appearance of historic cities (Torres, 2009; Rodregues *et al.*, 2012; Hanachi and Fadaei Nezhad, 2011). Therefore, for preventing destruction of local cultural heritage, it is necessary to establish a regulatory framework to control aesthetic quality of new intervention within historical context. This can be obtained through exploring of people perception and preferences in dealing with new infill design in historical context and their evaluation with respect to the aesthetic response. A comprehensive study must consider all aspects of environmental aesthetic and physical characteristics that influence in peoples' evaluation of new design in historical context. Based on the previous researches, there are two kinds of

aesthetic responses, tangible and intangible. Tangible responses refer to physical characteristics of environment and intangible responses relate to the expressive evaluation of human affection.

Some organizations like UNESCO and ICOMOS have some recommendations and guidelines for intervention in historical context as cultural heritages to conserve and prevent damage to them. According to Torres (2009: 5) "usually these guidelines or recommendations for adding to a historic area are not clear guidelines or recommendations. None of these regulations give suggestions on what should be the key elements to address, more than general indications of mass, scale and materials, in order to design". In addition, according to Alderson (2006:26), "preservation standards and lead organization policies supported by a regulatory-enforcement process can protect historic buildings, encourage sensitivity to historical contexts, and allow for new contributions but cannot make a less-creative architect more creative or be counted on to bring about outstanding design solutions". Alderson believes that preservation standards alone encourage, but cannot cause, either preservation or design excellence in historic-context response. Also in UNESCO's conference on "World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture - Managing the Historic Urban Landscape" which was held in 2005 Australia, it was widely discussed "the criteria and guidelines for conservation management of the historic urban landscape are urgently needed and that existing charters and recommendations in this regard are no longer sufficient" (UNESCO' newsletter, 2005: 1). Therefore, a notable gap could be seen where new design parameters are necessary in order to form a guideline for new intervention in urban historical context.

In discourses of new construction among historical context, one of the main treatment that suggested by professionals (Groat, 1988; Eleishe, 1994; Vosmek, 2008, Torres, 2009) and lead organization (UNESCO, 2004; ICOMOS, 2011) is the issue of compatibility. Compatibility of new building with its context has been widely discussed in the theory of contextualism. However, the centres of the discussion were varied in terms of formal patterns till climate patterns. According to Vosmek (2008), the most contextual issues in the previous researches were

considered base on formal components of buildings more than symbolic aspects of environment. Brolin (1980), Groat (1983), Eleishe (1994), and Torres (2009) in their researches have been emphasized only in the assessment of formal relationship of the new buildings and their surroundings as a contextual relationship. While, Lang (1987) believed that in the environmental assessment process, historic buildings and historical districts tend to be perceived positively and should be considered in both aspects of formal and symbolic together. Low (1992: 165) believed that a "symbolic relationship formed by people giving culturally shared emotional/affective meanings to a particular space or piece of land that provides the basis for the individual's and groups' understanding of and relation to the environment". Therefore, in order to assess any contextual relationships, it is vital to consider both aspects of environmental variables instead of only formal variables.

Another issue involves in dealing with new construction in urban historical context is debate of regulatory mechanisms and control of urban aesthetics (Torres, 2009; Rodregues *et al.*, 2012; Hanachi and Fadaei Nezhad, 2011). Decision makers and design professionals attempt to develop and introduce new approaches to create new construction schemes in such a way that they can support the older surroundings, particularly those located within the historic area. Design control is one of the major ways for protection of the built heritage against the destructive or disruptive issues. Design controls attempt to have a control over individuals' acts for good of the community. Throughout the world design review, as a part of design control, is particularly employed in the large cities (Da Luz Reis and Lay, 2010). In order to achieve success, all design controls whether administrative or discretionary should be based on proper appearance guidelines which are obtainable by research (Nasar, 1997). For this reason, study of different aspects of the built environment, specially the built heritage and new addition to this context, play a significance role in control of aesthetic quality of historical context to form a comprehensive guideline for further developments.

It has been shown that peoples' appreciation of their environment including aesthetic appreciation is affected seriously by several environmental factors. According to the literature reviews there is no information between these factors and

aesthetic relationship of new construction in a historical context. In the Aesthetic assessment of new construction in historical context, it should be considered the relationship of evaluative responses with physical characters. According to Lang (1987) in the evaluative response, there are probabilistic relationships between perception and cognition with the physical characteristics of built environment and each other as well. The aesthetic experience seems to elicit from the observer the combined exercise of human capacities of perception, cognition, and affection (Nasar, 1997; Chon, 2009). Within the aesthetic experience these capacities appear to be integrated: perception makes possible cognition; cognition influences perception; emotional states indistinctly affect perception and cognition; and both perception and cognition give rise to different emotional reactions in the observer (Olascoaga, 2003). Chon (2009) considered two broad components in evaluative response to the aesthetic as 'perceptual/cognitive' and 'emotional/affective' properties that related to the two types of environmental variables including formal and symbolic. Furthermore, in earlier studies conducted by Kaplan (1987), Nasar (1997), and Gifford *et al.,* (2002) about aesthetic evaluation, some expressive properties had been identified as the intangible aesthetic responses for evaluating built and natural environments. These studies identified some 'emotional/affective' variables such as expression, pleasantness, interestingness, friendliness, exciting; and some 'perceptual/cognitive' variables such as complexity, simplicity, meaningfulness, coherence, novelty, familiarity and experience. Affections of these variables in evaluating aesthetic fitness are understood easier for designers to communicate with their clients as well as the inhabitants of the historical context. Therefore, for establishing aesthetic fitness of new building and its historical neighbours, this research considers comprehensive relationship of both aspects of environmental variables: formal and symbolic and their association in perceptual/cognitive and emotional/affective responses of aesthetic evaluation.

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